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Oct. 22, 1965

Prof. J. Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
Stanford University School  
of Medicine  
Stanford Medical Center  
300 Pasteur Drive  
Palo Alto, Cal.  
USA

Dear Prof. Lederberg,

You may know the UNESCO journal "Impact-Science and Society" which has a very wide circulation and reputation for selecting important subjects.

As I mentioned, when we met in Stanford earlier this year UNESCO is now in the process of launching a "Microorganism's Program" and in this connection it has been felt that it would be appropriate to devote a full issue to microbiology. This is a most gratifying interest and when I recently visited Paris I discussed the planning of this issue with the responsible authorities at the UNESCO House. I also talked with André Lwoff who promised to contribute a paper on "Order out of Confusion - A case for Systematic Approaches in Microbiology." This will give an idea of the taxonomic problems inherent in the area of microbiology, discuss the current efforts to regularize virology in the same way as bacteriology, and give a background to the need for culture collections. The article may perhaps be finished by a plea for a systematic survey of the microorganism's world which is every nations common natural resource.

Personally I have promised to contribute a paper on "Microbiology and World Affairs", which will be a bird's eye view ranging from agreements about Mars-probe sterilization to negotiations about inspection and control of biological weapons (a special Pugwash study group on the latter area in fact meets here in Stockholm today). I will try to present the international organizations both as a pressing need and as an expression of concern for the demographic pressures which microbiology has helped to create. However this aspect would only be lightly touched upon, since a special paper would be devoted to: "Infections Diseases and Human Ecology" (R. Dubos, A.A. Miles, G.S. Wilson or a person of this type).

Also we visualize a paper on "Horizons in Industrial Microbiology", by one of the japanese, who are now among the leaders in this particular field.

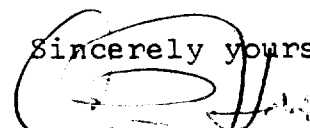
This prelude now brings me up to the \$ 68.000 question: Would you be willing to write on "The Impact of Microbial Genetics on Science and Technology"? We all felt that nobody could do better justice to this area, which offers so many tempting points for extrapolation. However we of course like to leave both the title and the emphasis open for your own decision and only speculated very loosely about the contents. Perhaps there might be an account of some studies in molecular biology and a mention of a few successful applications (penicillin-mutant selection etc.). This could serve as a take off point for an imaginary account of the impact which available genetic manipulation techniques might have, if systematically used, and of the horizons opened by the feed-back from molecular biology.

If you would accept this "mission" (for which there is a token of \$ 200 based on 10.000 words preferably delivered during January) I will ask Dr. A. Pérez-Vitoria, the Editor of Impact, to send you a letter about practical details.

Please give this suggestion a favourable consideration in spite of the fact that there are so many tasks which compete for your time. Personally I would not have accepted if I had not felt that microbiology is now at a critical turning point, where a contribution of this sort might be very, very helpful,

I expect to participate in the NASA Sterilization Conference at Caltec between Nov. 16-18, and hope that I will see you there.

Sincerely yours,

  
C.-G. Hedén  
Chairman UNESCO/ICRO  
Microbiology Panel

cc. Dr. A. Pérez-Vitoria